

## GAS MANTLE MANUFACTURERS

Dave Hill

I recently bought another old book, the story of the first 33 years of the last century, in news photographs, typical of the informative, but cheaply produced books published by the newspapers between the wars. In the introduction H. V. Morton, who himself wrote a lot of books about Britain, mused that one of the greatest inventions of 1900, to him as a child, was the gas mantle, by Dr Welsbach. Before it's incandescent white light it had been the yellow light of the gas flare or oil light. I can vaguely remember incandescent gaslights in my Gran's house, more familiar were the ones in early holiday caravans

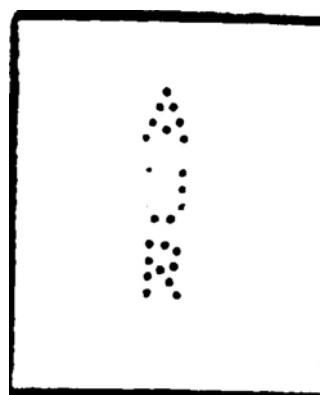
or camping lights. Youngsters will not even have heard of gas lighting but it was the reason for the birth of the gas industry, before heating or cooking by gas were thought of.



My Guinness History of Inventions tells me that Carl Auer, an Austrian, invented the gas mantle, later he became Baron von Welsbach. The mantle was "a loosely woven silk or cotton thimble which became incandescent when fitted over a hot non luminous flame because it was impregnated with thorium oxide and a little cerium oxide." How he found this out is not recorded, I've heard of neither chemical! But I do know how fragile they were, especially when camping, the gas would soon blow thru any hole that developed!

The Welsbach Light Co Ltd., Welsbach House, 344 Grays Inn Road London was the user of a perfin A5570.01 A/U/R. Why exactly they used this lettering is unclear – maybe one of the members has a suggestion.

Falk Stadelmann & Co Ltd also made gas mantles and lights with their "Veritas" trade mark. Veritas House, Lionel Street, Birmingham, suppliers of oil lamps and components. Originally a German firm, they later incorporated Veritas, Wright and Butler

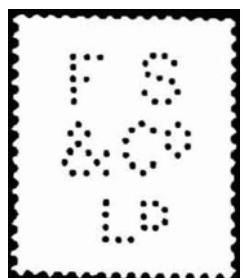


A5570.01

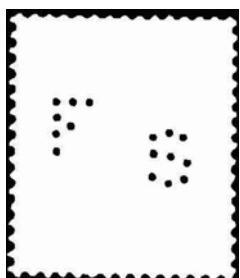
(c1912), Palmer & Co. of London, W Williams & Son of Birmingham and, by 1933, James Hinks & Son but continued use of the old trade names for some time. Their main warehouse depot was at Veritas House, 83-93 Farringdon Road, London by the late 1930s.

They used various FS/&Co/Ld perfins F3800.01 etc, most ceased during the war, except for a perfin machine in their Glasgow office. There are in fact ten different die recognised in our Illustrated Catalogue. During the war FS perfins F3680.01M was used and possibly a provisional F3680.01p was produced for them by Slopers. There was also a die known with a "rogue pin" above the FS and Roy thinks this is a pin

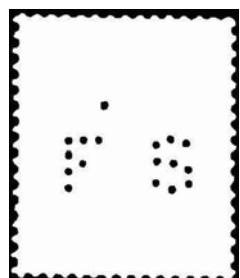
left in when the die ND/FS was modified to make FS. They also traded as just plain Falk Ltd and stopped using the FS perfin in about 1969. At various times Falks just used their Veritas trademark, because perhaps their name sounded too Germanic.



F3800.01

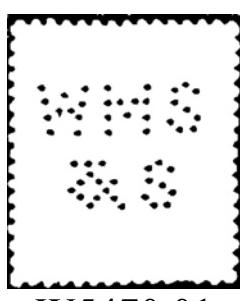


F3680.01p

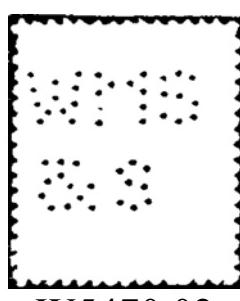


F3681.01

Near neighbours and mantle manufacturers, W M Still & Sons Ltd used two WMS/&S perfins W5470.01 & .02. Stills were in Hatton Garden, which runs parallel with Farringdon Street, where Falks London Office was. Perhaps there are other gas mantle manufacturers lurking in our catalogue.



W5470.01



W5470.02